



Illustration by Jeanne R. Janish,
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RIBES TRISTE **SWAMP RED CURRANT**

Swamp Red Currant is a shrub that is up to 1 m tall. It has unarmed spreading to nearly prostrate, straw-colored stems that are glabrous to sparsely hairy and glandular. The alternate leaves have petioles and broadly spade-shaped blades that are up to 10 cm wide and resemble a maple leaf. Leaves are glabrous above but sparsely hairy below. 6-13 short-stalked flowers are borne in pendant, open, spike-like inflorescences in the leaf axils. The flowers have a glabrous, saucer-shaped, purple or purple-spotted, 5-lobed calyx that is 2-3 mm long and 5 reddish-purple petals that are ca. 1 mm long. The 5 stamens are ca. as long as the petals, and the 2 glabrous styles are united below midlength. The ovary is attached inside the base of the calyx and matures into an egg-shaped, glabrous, bright red berry that is less than 1 cm long. Flowering in July.

Distinguished from *RIBES HUDSONIANUM*, the other native species with unarmed stems and saucer-shaped flowers, by its smooth calyx without glands. A hand lens and technical key are needed for positive identification.